

REMARKS

Claims 8-25 are currently pending in the subject application and are presently under consideration. Claims 8, 11, 16, 18, and 22 have been amended as shown on pp. 2-5 of the Reply. Claim 25 has been canceled herein without prejudice or disclaimer.

Applicants' representative thanks the Examiner for the courtesies extended during the telephonic interview on November 16, 2007, between Examiner William H. Wood and Applicants' representative Bradley D. Spitz. During the interview, the rejection of claims 8-15 under 35 U.S.C. §112 and the rejection of claims 8-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103 were discussed. Further, proposed amendments to claims 8, 16, and 22 were discussed in view of said rejections.

Favorable reconsideration of the subject patent application is respectfully requested in view of the comments and amendments herein.

I. Rejection of Claims 8-15 Under 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 8-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Specifically, the Examiner asserts that the meaning of the phrase "business operations and their technology specific applications" as recited in claim 8 is unclear. Applicants' representative has amended claim 8 for clarity to recite that business processes are implemented independent of *business operations . . . and technology(ies) or application(s) through which the business operations are performed*. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

II. Rejection of Claims 8-25 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 8-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Boden *et al.* (US 5,930,512) in view of Lau (US 6,598,219) and in further view of Smith *et al.* (US 7,171,647). Withdrawal of this rejection is requested for at least the following reasons. The cited references, either alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest all features recited in the subject claims as amended. "To reject claims in an application under §103 . . . the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations." *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 USPQ2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991); *see* MPEP §706.02(j).

Independent claim 8 (and its corresponding dependent claims) recites: *A system that facilitates modeling of business processes comprised of a plurality of business operations, comprising: a computer-readable medium; and a plurality of computer-executable files comprising: **a scheduling component that employs a dataflow diagram constructed by a user based on an XML scheduling programming language to define a flow of a business process, the dataflow diagram includes actions that are coupled via data flowing between them and defined as virtual ports and messages representing business operations received between the virtual ports and implements the business process independent of business operations represented in the dataflow diagram and technology(ies) or application(s) through which the business operations are performed;** and a binding component independent of the scheduling component that binds business operations associated with a business process to the technology(ies) or application(s) through which the business operations are performed, the binding component uses one or more binding files constructed by a user for the technology(ies) or application(s) through which the business operations are performed via an XML scheduling programming language to define one or more message structures, port connections, port interfaces, or message interfaces for the technology(ies) or application(s) and to resolve references to virtual ports or messages in the dataflow diagram to references to the technology(ies) or application(s).* Thus, an XML scheduling programming language (e.g., SLANG) can be employed by a user to define a business process as a series of actions expressed in terms of abstract structures such as ports and messages. (See p. 20, ll. 26-30; p. 21, l. 29 – p. 22, l. 7). One or more binding files that are generated independently of the business process can be utilized by the system, which provide technology specific descriptions that can be used to translate references to ports and/or messages in a business process. (See p. 3, ll. 10-12). As a result, a user having knowledge of the XML scheduling programming language recited by independent claim 8 can implement business processes on a variety of technologies and/or applications by creating a single dataflow diagram and is not required to author or have knowledge of how to author specific process descriptions for any specific technology and/or application.

Boden *et al.* relates to techniques for process modeling using a web server and a workflow server. (See abstract; col. 3, ll. 51-57). As disclosed by Boden *et al.*, a

representation of a process is initially authored using a workflow process representation language that is specific to a corresponding type of workflow server. For example, Boden *et al.* describes that a process representation can be created using the FlowMark Definition Language, which is utilized by a FlowMark workflow server. (See col. 13, ll. 10-17). Once such a process representation is received, a transformation is applied to represent the process in HTML. (See col. 14, ll. 42-44). An inverse transformation can subsequently be applied to the HTML representation to create a process representation usable by a given workflow server. (See col. 23, ll. 6-10). However, Boden *et al.* further discloses that the inverse transformation is only operable to transform an HTML representation generated by an initial transformation from a workflow process representation. As stated in Boden *et al.*, the inverse transformation “does not take any HTML page, go through the transform, and come out with an executable process.” (col. 23, ll. 27-30). Thus, a process representation specifically authored for a workflow server is a prerequisite for utilizing the HTML representation described by Boden *et al.* In contrast, as noted above, independent claim 8 provides ***a scheduling component that employs a dataflow diagram constructed by a user based on an XML scheduling programming language to define a flow of a business process, the dataflow diagram includes actions that are coupled via data flowing between them and defined as virtual ports and messages representing business operations received between the virtual ports.*** Thus, independent claim 8 recites that a generalized process representation can be directly authored by a user without requiring the initial workflow server-specific representation required by Boden *et al.*

Lau relates to techniques for constructing data models using XML. (See abstract). However, Lau, like Boden *et al.*, is silent as to a scheduling component that functions as recited by independent claim 8. To overcome the deficiencies of Boden *et al.* and Lau, the Examiner additionally relies on Smith *et al.* Smith *et al.* relates to the generation of a process-driven system. (See abstract). As described by Smith *et al.*, a process model can be provided to a software tool that maps the process model to a set of existing web-based resources, such as web pages or forms. (See col. 2, ll. 56-60; col. 4, ll. 39-46). A user charged with executing the modeled process can then be guided through the process by navigating the mapped web-based resources. However, like Boden *et al.*, the web-based

representation provided by Smith *et al.* initially requires a process representation authored using a business modeling tool. (See col. 4, ll. 31-34). In contrast, independent 8 enables a user to model and implement a business process using only a general representation of the process.

Likewise, independent claims 16 and 22 have been amended in a similar manner to independent claim 8. Thus, the cited references, either alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest all limitations of independent claims 16 or 22 for the reasons stated above. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

The present application is believed to be in condition for allowance in view of the above comments and amendments. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

In the event any fees are due in connection with this document, the Commissioner is authorized to charge those fees to Deposit Account No. 50-1063[MSFTP102US].

Should the Examiner believe a telephone interview would be helpful to expedite favorable prosecution, the Examiner is invited to contact applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

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